

CITY OF ABERDEEN  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

A meeting of the Aberdeen Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m., May 15, 2013, in the Council Chambers by Chairman Swisher.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Joe Swisher, Commissioners Charles Glassman, Karen Heavey, Kevin Miller, Terri Preston, Mark Schlottman, and Amy Snyder

OTHERS PRESENT: Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning & Community Development  
Gil Jones, Recording Secretary

The minutes of the April 10, 2013, meeting were approved.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. **Review 3<sup>rd</sup> Revised Final Subdivision Plat – Lots 1A and 7, Beards Hill Park**  
**Location: 1001 Beards Hill Road at corner of Maryland Route 22 (proposed Chick-fil-A site).**

Representatives: Dudley Campbell, Bay State Land Services, and Joseph Ucciferro, Bohler Engineering.

Mr. Campbell recounted the survey work done by his firm that was then combined with Bohler's engineering drawings to come up with the plan before the Planning Commission this evening. This update also includes easement and storm water management (SWM) details. He indicated the previous preliminary subdivision plan had been approved by the Planning Commission in July 2012 and by the Mayor and City Council in November 2012. The revised plat also encumbers part of Lot 1A to include with Lot 7 in order to accommodate the Chick-fil-A (CFA). The total site size is roughly 5.476 acres. Mr. Ucciferro said the engineering plans are close to approval.

Mrs. Grover indicated the preliminary subdivision plan called out parcels 625 and 2817, but this plan shows only parcel 625. Mr. Campbell said he believes this plan is all parcel 625, but will check with the Department of Assessments and Taxation to make sure. Mrs. Grover asked Mr. Ucciferro to go over the preliminary subdivision plan for the benefit of the new members of the Planning Commission. Mr. Ucciferro indicated the existing property intended for CFA was .79 acres, but the property lines were moved to expand the parcel to 1.04 acres, in order to accommodate the City's parking regulations. He pointed out the parking and circulation plan, and indicated a total of 46 parking spaces were required, with 49 spaces provided.

Mrs. Grover read into the record the comments that had been sent to Mr. Campbell by the Aberdeen Department of Public Works, to wit: Remove owner's and Master Plan Conformance

Statement (this water and sewer availability will be managed by a submittal to the Health Department by the City of Aberdeen); Add Note 9 to the site data (there will be no change in water and sewer use for Lot 1A); Provide certified water and sewer use calculations for Lot 7; Under “Notes” remove “This site is served by public water and public sewage,” and replace it with “Lot 1-A is served by public water and public sewerage at this time. Lot 7 will require an upgrade to current water and sewer lines, at the owner’s expense, to ensure Lot 7 can be adequately served;” and provide State Highway Administration (SHA) comments regarding the driveway entrance.

Mr. Glassman expressed concern over the entrance in relation to traffic coming off Maryland Route 22 and feels it may pose a problem. Mr. Ucciferro said this has been examined and the new entrance is actually further from Route 22 than the existing entrance. He stated the new entrance also allows for maximum flexibility in the stacking queue for the drive-thru. CFA likes to have 16 in a stack; this layout allows for 25. He added they have had numerous discussions with SHA and final submittals have been made to them. Mr. Glassman expressed concern over the ability of fire-fighting apparatus to access the location. Mr. Ucciferro said there would be a direct drive from the CFA to the Holiday Inn Express (HIX). Mr. Glassman added that the apparatus would also need to be able to go around the building itself. Mr. Swisher asked if the building would have fire sprinklers. Mr. Ucciferro said it would. Mr. Glassman asked where the fire connection would be located. Mr. Ucciferro said it would be in the rear of the building.

Mrs. Snyder asked if the entrance off Beards Hill Road would be one way in, one way out. Mr. Ucciferro said yes, with subsequent left turn ability provided through the HIX lot to Beale, then over to Beards Hill.

Mr. Swisher asked if anything had been added to the lot or if the lot is still basically the same size. Mr. Campbell said he used the approved preliminary site plan from last July and that is what is reflected in the plat presented this evening. Mr. Swisher asked again if anything had been added or subtracted. Mr. Ucciferro said it had not. Mr. Swisher asked about the L-shaped area on the drawing with cross-hatch lines. Mr. Campbell said this illustrates the cross-easement for access to the HIX. Discussion ensued over current and proposed entrances to the CFA, comparison of the preliminary site plan to the subdivision plat, and SWM easements. Mr. Campbell added that the plan includes provisions for fire apparatus movement into the site.

**Motion by Mr. Schlottman, seconded by Ms. Preston, to approve the 3<sup>rd</sup> Revised Final Subdivision Plat – Lots 1A and 7, with incorporation of the comments from City staff. Motion passed unanimously.**

At this point, the Chairman called for a two-minute break.

## **2. Discussion on Aberdeen Form-Based Code/amendments to Chapter 235, Development Code**

Presenters: David Dahlstrom, AICP, Upper Eastern Shore Regional Planner, Maryland Department of Planning (MDP); Stacey Dahlstrom, AICP, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT); Pat Keller, Deputy CAO, Statewide Service Development, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA).

Mrs. Grover introduced the three presenters and indicated they would be going over the highlights of the proposed amendments to the Development Code that would speak to form-based codes (FBC) and transit-oriented development (TOD). Mrs. Grover proposed that a work session for the Planning Commission be held on Wednesday, June 12 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. to go over the changes in more detail, with a goal of final presentation and recommendation on Wednesday, July 10, at the Planning Commission's regular meeting.

Mr. Swisher asked who initiated this program. Mrs. Grover said grants have been received from MDOT and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. Mrs. Dahlstrom added that since this is a State-designated TOD area, the City was eligible for technical assistance from the State.

Mrs. Grover gave an overview of the areas affected by the TOD and the results of public workshops related to this effort that identified elements of concern expressed by residents and business owners. Mr. and Mrs. Dahlstrom gave a power point presentation touching on various elements and goals of the proposed FBC including the TOD Master Plan, the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, primary and secondary focus areas, streets and streetscapes, pedestrian ways, and architectural concepts and re-use.

Mr. Swisher asked about future parking for the train station and the expanded development area, as the current station parking lot is usually packed and the use concepts show the lot being re-developed for possible retail and/or office space. Mrs. Dahlstrom said that structured parking could be realized inside the buildings themselves, with use agreements entered into with MARC for use of the spaces. She felt that re-development of the lot would be through public/private partnerships, and indicated the plan has a bonus provision for creation of parking and green space. Mr. Keller said the MTA is also concerned about parking for commuters, and indicated a parking garage is anticipated within this overall development.

Mrs. Heavey asked for a clarification of "bonus parking." Mrs. Dahlstrom said the plan would allow between 4 and 12 additional stories, depending on what zone the project is in and if certain conditions are met, especially in terms of parking and green space. Mrs. Heavey expressed concern over the inconsistent height of buildings. Mr. Dahlstrom indicated that buildings which are side-by-side and across the street from each other would have the same maximum height, as such buildings are designed to complement each other. In addition, the height bonus would only apply to those buildings around the station area. Mr. Dahlstrom said the recommended minimum height in the TOD area would be 2 stories.

Mr. Swisher asked if a plan of this nature has been undertaken in other areas of the State. Mrs. Dahlstrom said this is the first opportunity for MDOT involvement with a local community in developing FBC. Mr. Swisher asked how the overall concept came about. Mr. Dahlstrom said a group of architects in the 1990s saw a lot of development that was suburban in nature, but wanted to get back to traditional downtown concepts. Mr. Swisher asked if this type of plan had been done in Baltimore. Mr. Keller said there are 6 to 8 TOD zones designated in Baltimore. The regulations are basically designed to get new buildings in downtown areas to fit in with their traditional surroundings. Mr. Dahlstrom said over 300 jurisdictions have adopted some form of FBC for their areas. The idea is to maintain the positive qualities of downtown and expand on them.

Mr. Swisher asked about the vision for downtown, as many stores that had been there have moved to the Interstate 95 area and Wal-Mart. Mrs. Dahlstrom said the idea of the plan is to provide an incentive to businesses to come back to downtown in order serve those that live there and don't want to get in their car for everything. Mr. Dahlstrom added that this won't happen if the current Code remains unchanged.

Mr. Schlottman said this project is being viewed somewhat from the perspective of a 50 to 70 year-old that drives everywhere. This concept is meant to attract younger people who don't necessarily want to drive, those that are 30ish and younger. Mr. Keller said this type of plan is not for everybody, but it provides an option that does not currently exist. Mr. Dahlstrom said the new TOD use categories also give greater development flexibility than current B-2 and B-3 regulations allow.

Mr. Dahlstrom asked the Planning Commission to look carefully at the draft and make suggestions, as the members have an idea of those things they like and don't like, and what they would like to see.

Mrs. Heavey asked what controls those areas immediately outside the TOD areas. Mrs. Dahlstrom said those areas currently fall under the City's zoning regulations. This plan focuses on the Master Plan-ratified, specific TOD area. The work group started out with a small area, but Mrs. Dahlstrom indicated that if the Commission wanted to expand the area it could do so.

Mr. Miller asked if Amtrak was still on board with this project and what would happen if they decide to withdraw or close the station. Mr. Keller felt that unless a catastrophic change occurs, Amtrak will remain involved, and that conversations with them have been in terms of expanding MARC service.

Mr. Schlottman expressed concern that SHA has not been at these meetings. He felt that while it may seem to be a petty thing, developers are going to look at the lack of grass cutting in the median of Route 40 and feel that if SHA can't do that, then what about larger things?

Mr. Swisher felt there are several items to address at this point: identifying the priorities in starting this process; determining what kind of shops and businesses to have in this area, as many downtowns have died due to lack of parking; identifying parking areas for the east side of the tracks; particular identification of parking locations; and improvement of the appearance and utility of the current train station itself. Mrs. Grover suggested that some of the answers to these questions might be found in the Master Plan document.

There being no further business or public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

---

Planning Commission Chairman

---

Recording Secretary

---

Date of Approval